

Safety and Security

Overview

Bulgaria is an external EU border and the country is looking at joining the Schengen area. This is one main reason why safety and security is an important issue for the Bulgarian government and businesses short to medium term until 2015. The Bulgarian Ministry of Interior together with the Ministry of Finance, Customs Agency, and Border Police are looking for ways to improve and strengthen management of external borders, to alleviate penetration of pandemic diseases, to fight organized crime, terrorism and cyber crime.

Combating multiple threats such as trafficking of persons, drugs, money laundering, and terrorism are some of the most serious forms of organized crime, which are and will continue to be addressed by the government of Bulgaria in the short to medium term with the support of the EU.

Other specific threats to be addressed are of cross-border importance, which all Ministries in Bulgaria will be addressing are cybercrime and disasters. Europe and more specifically Bulgaria, being EU external border is a key target for cybercrime because of its advanced Internet infrastructure, high number of users, and its internet-mediated economies and payment systems. Citizens, businesses, governments and critical infrastructure must be better protected from criminals who take advantage of modern technologies.

In 2010 Ministry of Interior introduced the 112 disaster response system, which will have to be integrated at a later stage with the overall EU disaster response system, prevention policies and legislation. By now the system has been improved and used very effectively.

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

Current safety & security projects include, but are not limited to, improvement and upgrade of public safety and traffic safety, timely response to disasters and introduction of intelligent transport systems management.

The cities of Sofia and Varna completed projects for video surveillance in the central areas and other sensitive zones, including traffic safety and public safety. Video surveillance was launched in Varna, using 229 cameras, monitoring pedestrian areas, major crossings, and traffic safety.

The system launched was the first big scale monitoring system introduced in Bulgaria. Two other cities, Blagoevgrad and Lovech, have partially developed a video surveillance system. The central area of Sofia is already under video monitoring, and the project will be extended to public schools and kindergartens. The public institutions under video surveillance are expected to reach approximately 140 at the final stages of the project. The number of installed cameras in the schools varies from 6 to 12. The network is gradually extended to other main boulevards, streets and entrance points in the city.

Other cities are considering the opportunity to build CCTV systems. Remote control systems and information systems, including monitoring of the traffic lights, street lights, and flood control were installed in some cities and similar projects will be considered in the future.

Besides video surveillance, demand is high for access control and perimeter security systems.

Opportunities

In an effort to join the Schengen Area, the Bulgarian government must develop projects to upgrade control on the EU's external borders and to integrate its system with the Schengen Information System (SIS). Years ago the EU pre-accession program PHARE allocated funds for the modernization of the Border Police equipment, but further upgrades are required.

Best prospects include X-ray scanning equipment, MR type of equipment, infrared mobile and stationary equipment, IPvideo surveillance, on site field testing, access control equipment, CCTV, laboratory equipment, ID security application equipment, new IT and high tech equipment, programs and related services.

Private sector growth in the safety and security equipment and services sector in Bulgaria is determined by the demand for new investments by financial institutions, airports, large industrial groups, multinational corporations, real estate companies, shopping centers, and retail chains.

Web Resources

Ministry of Finance, State Agency Customs – www.customs.bg

Ministry of Interior – www.mvr.bg

Ministry of Transportation – www.mtitc.government.bg

Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce – www.bcci.bg/fairs/security

Bulgarreklama Agency – www.iec.bg

Cyber Crime Academy – www.cybercrimeacademy.org